

INNOVATION FUND IMPLEMENTATION GRANT GUIDELINES

About the Innovation Fund

The [Innovation Fund](#) supports local education authorities (LEAs), traditional public schools, charter schools, institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations in planning, implementing and scaling innovative education programs that advance student achievement throughout Georgia.

Most recently, the Innovation Fund has received \$5 million in state funding to provide grants to eligible organizations focused on planning, implementing or scaling innovative education programs focused on the following priority areas:

1. Applied Learning with a Focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education,
2. Development and Replication of Blended Learning School Models,
3. Development and Replication of Innovative Resource Management Models, or
4. Teacher and Leader Induction and Development

Award Timeline

August 13, 2014	Grant Technical Assistance Day: Central Georgia Convention Center, Forsyth, GA
August 14, 2014	Grant Technical Assistance Day: GTRI Center, Atlanta, GA
August 22, 2014	Intent to Apply and Application Opens
October 27, 2014	Implementation Grant Proposals Due
December 15, 2014	Awards Announced

** All agencies interested in applying must attend one of the technical assistance days in order for your application to be considered. [Please click here for more information.](#)*



Eligibility Requirements

In order to apply for an Innovation Fund grant, your organization must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Be a local education authority (school district) (LEA), traditional public school, charter school, institution of higher education (IHE), state agency, or nonprofit organization.
*The Innovation Fund **cannot** grant awards to private schools, for profit entities, or individuals.*
2. Attend one of the Technical Assistance Days on August 13, 2014 or August 14, 2014.

Submission Instructions

To apply for an Innovation Fund grant, please follow the steps below:

1. Carefully review these Grant Guidelines, along with the definitions of key terms located on pages 11 -13 of this document.
2. Attend one of the Technical Assistance Days on August 13, 2014 in Forsyth, GA or August 14, 2014 in Atlanta, GA.
3. Beginning on August 22, create an account at <http://innovationfund.fluidreview.com>
4. Log into your account and complete the **Innovation Fund Intent to Apply Form**. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) will review your organization's Intent to Apply Form and verify that you are eligible to apply for an Innovation Fund grant.
5. Once you receive an email from GOSA notifying you that you are eligible to apply, log into your account at <http://innovationfund.fluidreview.com> to access and complete the implementation grant application.
6. Submit your completed application, including your answers to the application questions, along with all required documents, **no later than Monday, October 27, 2014.**

If you have any questions during the application process, please contact:

Rebecca Ellis
Governor's Office of Student Achievement
Program Manager, Innovation Fund
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General Information about Implementation Grants

Implementation grants will provide eligible organizations up to \$1,250,000 to implement an innovative education program aligned with one or more of the Innovation Fund priority areas:

- Applied Learning with a Focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education,
- Development and Replication of Blended Learning School Models,
- Development and Replication of Innovative Resource Management Models, or
- Teacher and Leader Induction and Development

Organizations will have two years from the date of the grant award (December 2014) to spend implementation grant funds.

Successful implementation grant applications will demonstrate that:

- The program you would like to implement: (a) is based on logical theory of change, (b) has measurable goals and objectives, (c) is strongly aligned with one or more of the Innovation Fund priority areas,
- Your organization has a strong evaluation plan that will clearly measure the success of your program against the stated goals and objectives,
- Your intended program will directly address a need, determined by data, in your school, district or community,
- You have an understanding of programs that are similar to yours,
- Key stakeholders and partners are committed to implementing the program,
- Your organization has the capacity, qualifications, governing body support, and time to successfully implement this program,
- Your organization has an intentional and feasible scope of work to implement the program, and,
- Your organization has a strategic budget that is aligned with your scope of work.

Successful applications will also be well-written and free of any grammatical or spelling errors.

The Innovation Fund implementation application will include the following sections. Below please find the following information:

- The number of questions per application section,
- The required documents for each section, and
- The possible points for each section.



Section	Number of Application Questions	Required Documents	Possible Points
Program Overview	9	n/a	30 points
Need for the Program	1	n/a	5 points
Similar Programs	1	n/a	5 points
Partnership Overview	2	Letters of Commitment	15 points
Capacity to Implement the Program	2	Resumes of Key Personnel	15 points
Scope of Work	1	Innovation Fund Grant Scope of Work	15 points
Budget	1	Innovation Fund Grant Budget Template	15 points

Please refer to the below section for specific information about each section of the implementation grant application.

Specific Information about the Implementation Grant Application

Program Overview (25 points)

This section should provide detailed information about your program. Successful program overview sections will include:

- **A clear and concise description of your program**, including a clearly articulated vision and mission and logical theory of change.
- **A description of the participants your program will serve**, including the target number (students, teachers or leaders) and type of program participants. When discussing the type of program participants, you may include information such as demographic information, grade level, subject area, school or district, or educational background.
- **A description of how your program will align with one or more* the Innovation Fund priority areas.** Please be sure to review the definitions of each priority area (located on p. 11-13 of this document), to ensure that your program matches one or more of these



definitions. You may also refer to information about your priority area from the Technical Assistance Day breakout sessions.

If your intended program will address more than one priority (for example, your program will provide training for STEM induction teachers on applied learning methods), please list both priority areas, and clearly state how your program will align with each priority.

- **Three to six clearly articulated SMART goals and outcomes.*** Please note that all goals must be written as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented, and Time-bound) goals. In addition, you must include at least three academic outcomes that will indicate if your program has generated positive student achievement results. For more information about SMART goals, please visit this link: <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Smart-Goals-Training-Videos.aspx>

We strongly recommend that you complete the **Grant Goals and Outcomes Chart**, available on the online application site before completing this section of the application. Please note, **you are not required** to upload the Grant Goals and Outcomes chart as part of your application. However, this chart will help guide you in completing this section.

- **A logical plan for collecting data and analyzing the outcome of your program**, including possible contractors* that will take the lead on evaluating your program.

**Please note, if you are awarded funds, you MUST use a portion of your grant funding to contract with an external evaluator. Please see the Evaluation Requirements section, located on page 8 of this document for more information.*

Need for the Program (5 points)

This section should demonstrate that your intended program will address a need and benefit students, teachers or educational leaders in your school, district, or community. You must include the data you used to determine this need, and explain how this data supports the need for the program.

Appropriate data include, but are not limited to: student test scores, teacher or leader evaluation results, or county demographic data (poverty rates, unemployment rates, etc.). Where appropriate, you may also include qualitative data, such as administrator observations of teacher or student needs.

Similar Programs (5 points)

This section should demonstrate that you have an understanding of the existing market, specifically programs that are similar to yours in both scope and nature. Similar programs may include



programs that serve a similar target population, utilize a similar model, have similar goals, or are focused on a similar priority area. In this section, you should also include any best practices or components of these similar programs that you will incorporate into your own program.

Partnership Overview* (15 points)

This section should demonstrate that you have strong existing or planned partners and stakeholders that will support the implementation of your program. Potential partners could include, but are not limited to, community organizations, nonprofit organizations, technical colleges, colleges, or universities, other schools or districts, businesses, and service providers. Successful partnership overview sections will clearly demonstrate how each partner will be utilized to implement the program. In addition, this section should demonstrate that your governing body* fully supports the implementation of this program.

**You must upload letter(s) of commitment from each partner listed in this section and your governing body. More information regarding letters of commitment can be found on page 8 in the Information about Required Documents section of this document.*

Capacity to Plan the Program (15 points)

This section must demonstrate that your organization has the capacity to plan your intended program. Successful Capacity to Plan the Program sections will demonstrate that:

- The individual who will lead or facilitate the implementation process has both the qualifications and time to plan your intended program*, and
- Your organization has demonstrated experience managing grants and implementing grants of a similar size and scope, and/or implementing programs that have yielded positive student, teacher, or leader outcomes.

**Please be sure to upload the resume(s) of the grant lead(s), along with resumes from other key personnel. More information regarding resumes of key personnel can be found on page 8 in the Information about Required Documents section of this document.*

Scope of Work (15 points)

Successful scopes of work will outline intentional and feasible milestones that will: (a) lead to the successful implementation of your program, and (b) generate positive student, teacher, or leader outcomes. In addition, you must clearly articulate any challenges you foresee in reaching these intended outcomes, and explain how you will mitigate these challenges.



You must also upload your scope of work using the **Innovation Fund Grant Scope Work Template**, available on the online application site. Please note that you must use the template provided.

When completing this template, you must indicate:

- The milestones you need to reach in order to successfully implement your program,
- The action steps you will take to meet these milestones,
- The timeframe for meeting these milestones, and
- Person(s) responsible for meeting these milestones.

You may include more than one action step for each goal. However, each goal should align with the intended outcome. Please see below for an example:

Milestone	Action Steps	Timeframe	Person(s) Responsible
Deliver training to 16 Kindergarten to 3 rd grade teachers on technology integration in elementary classrooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select teachers based on the technology integration readiness assessment. • Work with Young Scholar Technology Partners to design training. • Hire substitutes to cover participating teachers' classrooms during the training. 	February 2015	Grant Lead Technology Specialists at participating schools Young Scholar Technology Partners Representatives

Budget* (15 points)

This section must indicate how you will use your implementation grant funds (up to \$1,250,000) to implement your program, as well as how you intend to sustain your program beyond the grant term. For this section, you must upload the **Innovation Fund Grant Budget Template** available on the online application site. Please note that you must use the template provided to you.

When completing this template, please be sure to enter:

- The total amount of grant funds and funds from other sources (other grants, federal funds, district funds, etc.) that you plan to spend in each budget category,



- The specific items and cost of these items included in each budget category, (you may enter additional line items as needed), and
- A description and rationale for each of these items. You may include the description in the template provide, or attach additional pages as needed.

Successful budgets will demonstrate alignment between your expenses and your milestones listed in the previous section. In addition, all proposed expenditures must meet the following criteria:

- **Allowable:** the expense is not a prohibited use of state funding (see page 10 for more information),
- **Allocable:** the expense is directly related to the purpose and outcomes of your grant, and
- **Reasonable:** an objective person outside of your organization would agree that the expense is appropriate and reasonable for the purposes of the grant.

**Please be sure to review the Financial and Other Expectations on page 10 of this document prior to completing your budget.*

Information about Required Documents

In addition to the application questions, **Innovation Fund Grant Scope of Work**, and **Innovation Fund Grant Budget Template**, please remember to upload the following documents:

- **Resumes from Key Personnel** (*resumes will be considered in the Capacity to Plan your Program score*): You must upload the resume of the grant lead along with any other individuals that will play an integral role in the implementation process. These resumes should demonstrate that the individuals involved in the implementation process are highly-qualified to do this work.
- **Letter(s) of Commitment** (*letters of commitment will be considered the Partnership Overview score*): You must upload a letter of commitment from any listed partners, as well as your organization's governing body (superintendent, board chair, president or president's designee, executive director, or other appropriate official).

A letter of commitment is a statement of active participation in the project. An effective letter of commitment should:

- Be succinct, usually less than a page in length,
- Identify the project,
- Specify the roles and responsibilities of the governing body or partner,
- Specify the resources the governing body or partner will contribute, and



Convince the reader that the governing body or partner has the capacity to fulfill its responsibilities and is committed to achieving success.

Evaluation Requirements and Information

External Evaluation Requirements

The goal of Innovation Fund Implementation grants is to identify best practices and innovative programs that advance student achievement. In order to meet this goal, all organizations awarded implementation grants, must contract with a qualified external evaluator, who will be responsible for:

- Refining your proposed evaluation plan to ensure it accurately measures the impact of your program on your proposed outcomes,
- Assisting in the completion of required mid-year and end-of-year evaluation reports,
- Conducting and analyzing student, teacher or leader focus groups or interviews, where appropriate,
- Administering and analyzing student, teacher, or leader surveys, where appropriate, and
- Analyzing student outcome data, or teacher and leader effectiveness results.

Please note, GOSA will require a signed contract from your external evaluator no later than one month from the grant award date.

Transition from Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) and End of Course Tests (EOCT) to the Georgia Milestones Assessments

The Georgia Department of Education will implement the Georgia Milestones Assessments in the 2014-15 School Year. Given that you must include at least three academic outcomes in the Program Overview section, you may want to include an academic outcome related to these assessments. GOSA understands that, at the time of submission, you will not have baseline data to inform your intended outcomes based on state assessments. Therefore, you should base your outcomes on a reasonable estimate of how you anticipate your students may perform on these assessments. If your organization receives grant funding, you will have the opportunity to adjust your target outcomes based on baseline data from the 2014-15 school year

Please note, you may also choose academic outcomes related to other assessments you already use in your school, such as norm-referenced assessments or district benchmarks.

Financial and Other Expectations

Allowable Expenses

Funds disbursed through the implementation grant may be used for personnel, fringe benefits, materials, equipment, travel, contractual, and indirect costs. Allowable expenses in each category are outlined below. Please note that this list is not intended to be inclusive of every allowable expense, but rather, to give you an idea of the types of allowable expenses.

- **Personnel:** Staff salary, or a portion of salary, provided compensation is paid specifically to individuals working towards the grant objectives, AND the percentage of each individual's salary paid from grant funds is commensurate with the amount of time that the individual will dedicate toward the grant objectives.
- **Materials** for activities directly related to the grant, such as binders, notebooks, pens or pencils, post-it notes, chart paper, or other supplies for students, teachers, leaders, or personnel involved in grant activities
- **Equipment** for activities directly related to the grant, including computers, tablets, printers, or keyboards for students, teachers, leaders, or personnel involved in grant activities.
- **Travel** expenses directly related to the grant, including the cost of mileage, lodging, airfare and per diem amounts. Please note travel expenses must be in accordance with the State Travel Policy, available here:
http://sao.georgia.gov/sites/sao.georgia.gov/files/related_files/site_page/SOG_Statewide_Travel_Policy_012414_031214.pdf
- **Contractual** services with qualified individuals or organizations, such as service providers or evaluators that will directly serve the purposes of the grant.
- **Indirect Costs** of up to no more than 10% of your overall grant budget.

Innovation Fund grant funds can only be used for proposed expenses as outlined in the approved grant application, unless GOSA staff approve these expenses in writing prior to the expenses being incurred. GOSA reserves the right to approve or reject specific items requested that are not aligned with the grant program's intent.

In order to be reimbursed, all eligible activities' costs must be incurred by the recipient on or after the grant award date and prior to the project closeout. The Innovation Fund is a reimbursement-based grant program. Requests for reimbursement will be made on a quarterly basis, after services have been performed or procurement has been made and paid for by the recipient. In addition, all



eligible activities must be included in the grant application as part of the project or must have been approved by GOSA staff in writing.

Auditing Requirements

Organizations that receive an Innovation Fund grant must follow all applicable financial reporting and audit requirements set forth by the State of Georgia.

Grant Expectations

If your organization is awarded an Innovation Fund grant, you must adhere to the below expectations during the grant award period:

- Completing and submitting, in a timely manner, additional forms and certifications required for the use of state funding,
- Adhering to all provisions in your Innovation Fund Grant Contract,
- Completing and submitting, in a timely manner, quarterly expense and progress reports, mid-year evaluation reports, and end-of-year evaluation reports that include all requested information,
- Submitting any budget or milestone amendments to GOSA for approval prior to making those changes,
- Arranging for GOSA staff to make site visits, when requested by GOSA, to your program,
- Responding to emails and phone calls from GOSA staff in a timely and professional manner,
- Clearly communicating to GOSA both the successes and challenges of your grant work, and
- Attending a yearly conference with other Innovation Fund grantees to share your work.

Failure to adhere to these expectations may result in GOSA withholding funding from your grant award.

Definitions

Academic Outcomes are targets related specifically to increased student achievement, including, but not limited to:

- Graduation rates,
- For tested grades and subjects, a student's score on the state assessments, and
- Other measures of student learning and performance — provided that they are both rigorous and aligned with the goals of your grant — including benchmark data, student growth data, and student performance on English language proficiency assessments.

Applied Learning is the opportunity for students to integrate classroom content with authentic, real-world (personal, home, career, community, society) experiences. Through these experiences,



students develop and strengthen their problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, and self-management skills. Applied learning not only supports students in mastering content standards, but also equips them with the skills they need to be successful students and adults.

Blended Learning is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace, and at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home. In addition, the modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience. Blended learning is NOT simply placing technology in the classroom or providing students access to online courses. Blended learning utilizes technology to restructure traditional school models, promote data-driven and individualized instruction, leverage the strengths of effective educators, and advance student achievement. *(Definition adapted from [The Clayton Christensen Institute](#))*

A Charter school is a public school of choice that operates under the terms of a charter, or contract, with an authorizer, such as the state and local boards of education. Charter schools receive flexibility from certain state and local rules in exchange for a higher degree of accountability for raising student achievement. Charter schools are held accountable by their authorizer(s) for upholding the terms of their charter. *(Definition from [the Georgia Department of Education](#))*

Induction means the phase of a teacher or leader's career that begins upon hire. During this two to five-year development phase, new teachers and leaders:

- Learn to select and employ effective instructional strategies and student assessments,
- Adapt to the professional norms of a school, its district and the profession, and
- Receive on-the-job training through a specific program that addresses the unique needs of new teachers or leaders.

An Innovative Resource Management Model involves a school or LEA piloting new systems that restructure the relationships between and drivers of decisions regarding human and financial capital, as well as other available resources. This priority is designed to encourage schools and districts to reallocate existing funds in innovative ways in order to meet the individual needs of students and to maximize student achievement.

Institution of Higher Education (IHE) means a public or other nonprofit institution that:

- Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association,
- Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate,
- Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education, and

- Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree, or awards a degree that is acceptable for admission to a graduate or professional degree program, subject to review and approval by the State;
- or any institution within the Technical College System of Georgia. *(definition adapted from the [United States Department of Education](#))*

Local Education Authority (LEA) means a government agency which supervises the provision of instruction or educational services to members of the community. LEAs are also often referred to as “school districts.”

A Nonprofit Organization is:

- An organization that does not distribute its surplus funds to owners or shareholders, but instead uses them to help pursue its goals,
- Formed by incorporation and is registered to work in the State of Georgia,
- Has a 501 (c) tax exempt status (such as religious, educational, charitable, scientific, or literary organizations; civic leagues, social welfare organizations, and local associations of employees; labor, agricultural, and horticultural organizations; and business leagues, chambers of commerce, real estate boards, etc.)

STEM Education is defined as an integrated curriculum (as opposed to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics taught in isolation) that is driven by problem solving, discovery, exploratory project/problem-based learning, and student-centered development of ideas and solutions. *(Definition from the [Georgia Department of Education](#))*